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AM 2009-104

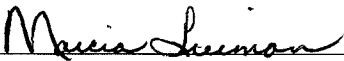
2010 Contract for Longmont Humane Society Services

Agenda Date: Town Board Meeting – November 10, 2009

Attachments:

- a. Longmont Humane Society 2010 contract.
- b. Memorandum by Chief Barbour regarding animal control.

Fiscal Note: 2009 & 2010 Budget for Animal Control \$6,000.


Finance Director

Submitted by: 
Chief of Police

Approved for Presentation: 
Town Administrator

AV Use Anticipated Projector _____ Laptop _____

Certification of Board Approval:

Town Clerk

Date

Summary Statement:

The Longmont Humane Society is proposing a contract for services for the year 2010 that may significantly increase costs for the Town of Frederick. The society explains that it needs to recoup the costs associated with all animals received at the shelter and that the proposed contract will account for only a part of those costs. Staff proposes increases in licensing fees for unaltered animals. Staff also proposes that the Town require cat owners to license their animals and that the ordinance be revised to prohibit stray domestic livestock.

Detail of Issue/Request:

The Longmont Humane Society has determined that the average cost for an animal to be cared for at the shelter is approximately \$336. After reviewing the operations of the shelter and taking several steps to economize, the society has determined that every animal brought to the shelter from the various communities, whether by municipal employees or by private citizens, should result in a payment of \$125. Further, the society proposes that each additional day beyond the average 5 days (for example, animals that must be quarantined for ten days because they bit someone) shall be paid at the rate of \$20 per day and that the municipalities shall pay it if the society is unable to collect from the owner.

The \$125 per animal fee is the 2009 rate. The 2010 contract will have additional circumstances requiring the payment of this fee. For example, previously the Town has not been required to pay anything for animals claimed by owners. Under the 2010 contract the Town will be billed for any costs not paid by the owners. Owners usually pay more than \$125. Also, the Town has not been expected to pay anything for animals surrendered by their owners to the shelter. The new contract will require the Town to pay the balance owed on surrendered animals. Owners are asked to pay \$35 per surrendered animal, which will leave \$95 to be paid by the Town. Dead animals from Frederick will cost \$50 each. (Dead animals, that may have been someone's pet, are kept in cold storage for a few days so that owners may claim them.) The dead animal fee is not changed from the previous contract. This service is rarely used.

Staff has considered what can be done to reduce costs. We will obtain a larger kennel enclosure for the sally port garage. This will enable us to keep animals longer, thus making it more likely that owners will be able to claim them here and avoid the trip to Longmont. We rarely have more than one animal in custody at a time and will not be keeping animals longer than twelve hours. It is also recommended that we encourage citizens to bring unwanted or stray animals to the police department rather than taking them to Longmont Humane themselves. We can then keep the animals as we would the ones picked up by the officers. Citizens picking animals up from the PD will still pay the \$60 impound fee to the Town.

The Community Service Officers report that stray dogs usually are those that have not been spayed or neutered. It has been suggested that owners of non-altered dogs be required to pay significantly higher license fees. Higher licensing fees for owners of non-altered dogs would (a) recover more of the costs of the animal control service and (b) induce some owners to get their dogs spayed or neutered. For example, the City of Aurora charges \$12 annually for a neutered animal. It charges \$132 per year for a dog (or cat) that is not spayed or neutered. Owners of dogs that are neutered and that have completed Canine Good Citizen Certification receive a 50% discount. Aurora also provides a 50% discount for residents 65 or older. Certified and neutered service dogs may receive a free license.

Another area of regulation that staff recommends for consideration is the licensing of cats. Cats received at the Longmont Humane Society from the Town of Frederick have accounted for a number of payments. It is not infrequent that the Community Service Officers deal with complaints by residents about property damage by cats. Last year the ordinance was revised to require that owners put identification tags on their cats. That measure has been found to be ineffective. Longmont, Greeley, Aurora, and Dacono require the licensing of cats.

It is unknown how many feral cats are in Frederick. Feral cats have been a problem in Dacono. Dacono adopted a TNR program (trap, neuter, and release) as a result of the experience with large numbers of feral cats. The program is based on the premise that feral cats are territorial animals, and that the ones that are captured, neutered and then released back into their home territory will keep out others. This

program has shown some promising results in various communities and is considered by some to be the only proven humane and effective method of controlling feral cat populations.

The Town of Frederick presently has no limit on the number of animals that a resident can have. Experience in other communities has shown that some persons can accumulate a number of animals that will result in unsanitary conditions that can render a residence uninhabitable.

Legal/Political Considerations:

Alternatives/Options:

There is no cost effective alternative to Longmont Humane for the disposition of stray or unwanted animals. Most veterinary clinics in the area are not interested in being used as shelters. One clinic in Firestone serves as the shelter for the Firestone Police Department. We explored that alternative in 2007 when staff was directed to find a shelter other than the one being used in Ft Lupton. The addition of animals from Frederick would have stressed the available space and it would have been costly to reserve kennel space for every holiday weekend. The Firestone clinic is a short-term shelter. The Firestone PD must still use the Longmont Humane Shelter in many cases. Our sally port garage enables us to locate a short-term kennel in our own facility.

Financial Considerations:

The Finance Department agrees with the recommendations stated in this AM.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff makes the following recommendations –

1. Include cats as animals requiring a license from the Town.
2. Significantly increase the license fee for unaltered animals.
3. Consider the adoption of an ordinance authorizing a “trap, neuter and release” program for feral cats.
4. Consider setting a limit on the number of animals permitted in one residence.